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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON IRELAND'S EFFORTS TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Despite recent negative media attention, Ireland has made significant strides in addressing instances of trafficking in persons (TIP) within its borders. At present, 57 investigations are ongoing, with a single case before the courts. A further three individuals were convicted in Romania, largely on the basis of Irish evidence. A final case is due to commence in Wales in January 2010. To date, ten suspected victims have been granted recovery and reflection periods, which have been extended as required. End Summary.

Media Attention

¶2. (SBU) On January 3, the Irish Independent newspaper reported that trafficking of foreign women for the sex industry is now endemic throughout the country. In the article, Fine Gael spokesman, Denis Naughton noted "it is well over a year since the introduction of human-trafficking legislation, yet the Government has failed to establish adequate protections and secure accommodation for these victims and to ensure prosecutions against traffickers occur." On January 6, PolOff spoke with Gerardine Coyle of the Department of Justice's Anti-Human Trafficking Unit. Despite the negative report, Coyle said that anti-TIP efforts have progressed well over the past year.

Ongoing Investigations

¶3. (SBU) Coyle said that, during the past year, the police have investigated 57 human trafficking offences. Of these, 37 relate to possible offences under the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008; eighteen to possible offences under the Illegal Immigrants Trafficking Act, 2000 and the remaining two to offences under the Child Pornography Act, 1998. A number of files are with the Director of Public Prosecutions for a decision on whether or not to prosecute. There is currently one case before the courts where a person is charged with a human trafficking offence under the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act 2008 in relation to the trafficking of a child for sexual exploitation. This case was listed for service of a book of evidence at Dublin District Court on 6 November 2009 when a bench warrant was issued for the accused.

International Co-operation

¶4. (SBU) Coyle indicated that, following a joint police trafficking investigation by Ireland and Romania, three people were sentenced (7 years imprisonment for the gang leader and 5 years imprisonment for each of the co-accused) in Romania for offences including the trafficking of human beings to Ireland, illegal possession of firearms, and organizing a criminal syndicate. The persons involved had returned to Romania from Ireland and were tried there largely on the basis of evidence gathered by the Irish police. This case focused on trafficking for the purpose of labor exploitation and involved 28 victims. A fourth person is awaiting trial in Wales on charges of trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation following raids on brothels in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and the UK under Operation Abbey. Operation Abbey is an investigation primarily targeting an organized prostitution gang.

Their activities include human trafficking, trafficking in prostitution, controlling prostitution and money laundering. The trial in this case is due to commence in Cardiff in January 2010. The case is likely to involve up to 130 members of the Irish police and five of the alleged victims of trafficking providing evidence by television link from Ireland to the court in Cardiff.

Recovery and Reflection

15. (SBU) Coyle noted that, since the enactment of the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) Act, a total of ten persons have been granted a period of recovery and reflection. A further person (an EU national) has been identified as a suspected victim of trafficking. Of the ten recovery and reflection periods granted, four have expired and these four persons have since been granted six months temporary residence permits with two of these in their second six months temporary residence permission.

FAUCHER